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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. Ross of Florida).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 26, 2011.

I hereby appoint the Honorable DENNIS ROSS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 5, 2011, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

STOP PLAYING GAMES WITH THE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, there is an air of unreality here on Capitol Hill. There are some people with no experience in government, little knowledge, and less regard about the outcomes who are pontificating, lecturing, and threatening. The disconnect between the rhetoric, the reality between governance and an ideological agenda is in large part why we

are in the conundrum we are in today with the debt ceiling, something that has routinely been increased year after year for decades.

It was on full display in the Republican-controlled House yesterday as we debated the Interior appropriation bill. Now remember, last week Republicans took to the floor with a so-called "cut, cap, and balance" proposal, which is their answer going forward with the economy. It would impose an 18 percent of GDP limit on the amount of spending that the Federal Government could employ in any one year. Now remember, that is not what we have done for years. Ronald Reagan never proposed a budget that was even as low as 21 percent of gross domestic product. So it's a dramatic reduction, more than 14 percent less than anything Ronald Reagan ever proposed.

Well, yesterday in the debate my colleague from Kansas offered an amendment, an amendment that I personally found destructive and unbalanced that would have done terrible things, singling out for elimination the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, zeroing out important resources for construction for fish and wildlife, construction and acquisition of land. It would be a 30 percent reduction in water infrastructure. Overall, it would have been an 11 percent reduction. But at least it was honest.

This is where in fact some of my Republican colleagues want to go. In fact, it is less than what they would have imposed with their proposal the week before. As I argued against the amendment on the floor, I predicted that it would fail overwhelmingly, that many Republicans would vote against it because even though they are willing to make reckless proposals disconnected from reality if the only consequences are polls and politics, when it really comes down to basics, even they don't want to impose it.

Remember what happened on the floor of the House when we were debating Republican and Democratic alternatives to the budget? The Republican Study Group offered up their proposal that went even further than my friend, PAUL RYAN's. And when it was passing, we watched Republicans start to twist arms to get people to vote against it because, again, it was something they thought was great politics and theater; but if it came closer to reality, they understood that it would hurt them if the American public understood the real agenda.

Well, we are now at a very serious stage dealing with the debt ceiling. Actions matter. Too many are still acting like they're on the campaign trail or at a Tea Party rally or on a Fox TV shout-fest. There have already been negative consequences from the reckless action of holding the debt ceiling hostage—American businesses are paying more; there are threats that we're going to be paying more for interest in the international bond market.

It's past time to stop this dangerous posturing. There is enough irresponsibility displayed already, we should avoid putting the rhetoric, in effect, into a budget.

Now is the time to stop playing games on the budget deficit. We've seen this movie before. The last time the Republicans took control in 1995 there was a debate on imposing a balanced budget amendment. It failed by one vote in the Senate, and it failed with the single Republican "no" vote, Mark Hatfield from Oregon. Senator Hatfield, in a profile in courage, stood up and made clear that he was all in favor of balancing the budget, but not with a gimmick long into the future. He was chair of the Appropriations Committee. He invited his colleagues to make the action by reducing the budget, not playing games with gimmicks. That's what we should do today.

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, delay, delay, delay is the administration's energy plan. The Keystone XL pipeline project would bring 700,000 barrels of oil a day from Alberta, Canada, to refineries in southeast Texas. This would provide more energy for America.

The President has had over 2 years to approve the project, but the State Department, the EPA, and out-of-towners have stonewalled the project on alleged environmental grounds.

Pipelines are the most cost-effective and more environmentally sound ways to transport oil and natural gas. Oil must reach our refineries somehow. We can either import oil from a safe, reliable pipeline from our neighbors or on risky tankers coming from unstable Middle Eastern countries. Even the EPA should be able to figure this out after 2 years of delay, delay, delay.

Our neighbors in Canada have developed a safe way to obtain crude oil from their oil sands. Unlike many of the countries in the world, the Canadians are concerned about environmental issues in crude oil production. They will sell us their crude oil. It will be piped to refineries in my district in southeast Texas and will be refined into energy and byproducts of crude oil. And it will create jobs in America.

If the White House fails to act, the Canadians will take their oil someplace else. The Chinese are interested in buying that oil, so it's going to be used and it will go to China. Why not let it come to America?

Some environmental extremists are against the project. Of course they are. They are against every type of energy that comes from below the ground. But they have no answers for our energy needs. They say they want green energy. Well, I do too, but there isn't sufficient green energy yet to run America. So they're against everything, it seems, except those curly CFL light bulbs that come from China. They're all in favor of those.

The radicals are against nuclear energy because, well, the Japanese had an earthquake that caused reactors to overheat, so no more nuclear energy.

□ 1010

They are against natural gas because they don't like fracking, even though safe fracking has been around for decades and they don't even understand what fracking does.

They don't want America to use coal even though our resources are abundant and new technologies have made clean coal safer and more efficient.

They don't like wind turbines because running turbines at night in west Texas may bother the flight pattern of bats.

They don't want more offshore drilling; certainly can't have that. And, of course, they are against domestic

crude oil anyway because they hate American oil companies.

So what's the answer? Well, the only White House plan that has been offered is to give American money to Brazil so Brazil can drill off its shores and then America will buy their crude oil. But no more offshore drilling for us it seems.

If we're going to buy crude oil from foreign countries, let's buy it from our neighbor, our ally, Canada. Or do the progressives prefer we keep buying crude oil from dictators like Chavez in Venezuela or continue to be held hostage by the monopoly of OPEC and Middle Eastern countries? Or do they just want us to do without energy altogether?

Meanwhile, gasoline is around \$4 a gallon. So it seems to me the progressives, if they get their way, will have no progress in energy self-reliance, and we'll regress and go back to the horse and buggy days. But whoa, wait a minute, Mr. Speaker, we can't go back to using horses because they, too, cause pollution.

Mr. President, approve the pipeline. Show some leadership. Time to start making progress on taking care of America's energy needs.

And that's just the way it is.

LAST BEST HOPE OF EARTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

"Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history.

"We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We, even we here, hold the power and bear the responsibility.

"We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of Earth."

Lincoln, of course, was talking about the state of a Nation in peril on December 1 in his address to Congress in 1862.

But if this Nation had not the leadership of that magnitude, who knows where we would be today. They faced terrible consequences and yet still had the extraordinary foresight and fortitude to charge ahead.

Today, we too face consequences. We face consequences of international economic impact, environmental and ecological destruction.

We consider this week a debt limit crisis that has brought out the best and worst amongst men and women I respect both here on this House floor and on the other side of this Capitol building and on cable news stations across the country.

We are also considering here in this House an Interior and Environment appropriations bill that simply says to

our children: You clean it up; we don't care to bear the burden. This bill does irreparable damage to programs that keep our air clean, our water drinkable, and that protect our national and natural heritage. These are not dollars spent without thought, nor are they investments of a trivial nature as some would have us believe.

Simply put, these are science-based, pragmatic investments in public health. These cuts, all told, will not save the country a penny. The policy riders included in this bill will cost tens of thousands of lives. The bill will expose our children, families, and communities to unnecessary illness and degrade our irreplaceable natural resources.

But this week we are not stopping at a debt ceiling quagmire and an Interior and Environmental appropriations abhorrence. We will continue to consider a measure that would deem congressional approval for the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. The Keystone would flow from Alberta down to the gulf coast, threading right through the vast Ogallala Aquifer, the main drinking water source for the Midwest.

You can ignore the dozen leaks the Keystone "one" system has had in the last year, stoking fears of a spill in the aquifer from the proposed expansion pipeline. You can ignore the 42,000 gallons that seeped from an ExxonMobil pipeline into the Yellowstone River in Montana earlier this month, under which Keystone XL would also run. You can ignore the science that says that the high energy process of production of tar sands increases greenhouse gas emissions, pollutes water sources, and harms the proposed region's boreal forests. And you can ignore the fact that testimony of TransCanada officials to Canadian regulators included the fact that the pipeline would drive gasoline prices in the Midwest higher, not lower.

But let's forget all that.

On procedure alone, this Congressional consideration of a bill that is currently under review by the Department of State is unnecessary and unprecedented, potentially negatively affecting our national security and safety.

This proposed pipeline needs no congressional approval. In fact, this proposed expansion need not be approved at all. It has drawn criticism from the Environmental Protection Agency, who suggested that the State Department should consider how construction would affect wetlands, migratory birds, and communities through which it passes.

So we stand here today to consider approving a project expansion that has been deemed mediocre at best. We stand here today to consider an environmental appropriations bill that has been deemed the worst we have ever seen. And we stand here today while everyone around us fights against a compromise that might keep our standing in the international economy